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Abstract

The existing research on international democracy promotion is characterised by a peculiar tension. On the one hand, many scholars agree that democracy promotion, since 1990, has indeed become a significant aim guiding the foreign and development policies of North-Western democracies. On the other hand, there is a far-reaching consensus that this normative goal is regularly ignored once it collides with economic and/or security interests. This article challenges the notion that we can understand the motives and drivers behind democracy promotion by assuming that interests and norms represent two neatly separated and clearly ranked types of factors. It argues that democracy promotion policies are the result of a complex interaction of interests and norms. After first developing this argument theoretically, the article presents results from a comparative research project on US and German democracy promotion that support this claim.

Keywords: Democracy promotion; international norms; national interests; foreign policy; United States of America; Germany

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Introduction

Since the 1990s, the promotion of democracy has frequently been depicted as a foreign-policy strategy that allows democratic states to simultaneously pursue their interests and follow their norms. As democratic regimes are considered inherently peaceful, cooperative and prone to economic interdependence, spreading democracy promises tangible benefits.[1] At the same time the promotion of democracy corresponds to the normative predispositions of democratic societies.[2] This harmony of interests and norms, however, holds only as a general proposition and in the long term, at best (Spanger and Wolff 2007). With a view to the actual practice of promoting democracy in individual countries, scholars have therefore continuously pointed to the fact that the normative aim of democracy promotion and other foreign-policy preferences such as security or economic interests frequently clash (see Carothers 1999; Goldsmith 2008; Grimm and Leininger 2012; Schraeder 2002, 2003). Scholars also largely agree on what governments do once they are confronted with conflicting objectives: They subordinate the allegedly soft or secondary goal of democracy promotion to those hard ‘national interests’ that ultimately dominate the foreign policy also of democratic states (see Carothers 1999: 16; Schraeder 2003: 33, 41).

There can be no doubt that the foreign policy of democratic governments is far from adhering in all circumstances to an ideal-type strategy of promoting the global spread of

democratic values and institutions. And this is quite plausibly related to what these governments perceive as their countries' national interests. Hence, the much-heard political criticism of double standards in the foreign policy of democratic states: For instance, while the US emphasises the importance of democratizing Cuba and European states impose sanctions on Belarus, no democratic country in the world is particularly active in trying to bring democracy to autocracies like China or even more so Saudi Arabia whose economic and/or security cooperation is regarded as crucial (see Youngs 2004: chapter 2).

At first glance, this notion of interest-driven double standards in democracy promotion is rather plausible. This paper, however, argues that it needs differentiation both in theoretical and in empirical terms. Heuristically, it is useful to distinguish between (democracy-related) norms and (material) interests as factors driving the foreign policy of democratic states. Yet, with regard to causal analysis, we argue that the juxtaposition of the two categories of preferences is not compelling. In order to understand and/or explain the behaviour of democracy promoters, we have to analyse how (perceived) material interests and normative predispositions mutually shape each other. More specifically, in systematically identifying the factors that motivate and guide democracy promotion, this article argues that democracy promotion policies are the result of a complex interaction of interests and norms.

In the following, we first discuss the state of the art on democracy promotion. We develop the theoretical argument why it is insufficient to expect democracy promoters to simply follow their tangible (material) interests when confronted with conflicting objectives and outline our alternative perspective on the interaction of interests and norms in democracy promotion. The second section of the article introduces a comparative research project on US and German democracy promotion in which we systematically studied how democracy promoters deal with conflicting objectives (see Wolff et al 2014). The results of this project, which are summarised in the third section, provide the empirical evidence that we have to look at the interaction of interests and norms if we are to understand the motives and drivers behind democracy promotion.

In this article, democracy promotion is defined in a broad sense and includes all measures aiming, from the outside, at 'establishing, strengthening, or defending democracy in a given country' (Azpuru et al 2008: 151).[3] Analysing democracy promotion,

therefore, requires looking at the entire spectrum of foreign, security, economic and development policies (see Schraeder 2003: 26). Systematically, we can distinguish five dimensions of democracy promotion: democracy promotion through (1) international observation (for instance, election monitoring), (2) foreign aid (democracy assistance), (3) diplomacy (moral appeals, shaming and blaming), (4) democratic conditionality (incentives and sanctions), and (5) coercive measures (use of military force). In terms of the aim pursued, democracy promotion is always promotion of democracy as understood by a given external actor (see Hobson and Kurki 2012). We therefore refrain from adopting any particular definition of democracy and assess democracy promotion against the declared aims and standards of the respective donor.

Theorising the interaction of interests and norms

There is a wide range of studies dealing with different aspects of the international promotion of democracy. Scholars have dealt with the specifics of democracy promotion policies employed by the US (Azpuru et al 2008; Carothers 1999; Cox et al 2000; Miller 2010; Monten 2005; Peceny 1999; Robinson 1996; T. Smith 1994) and the EU, respectively (Jünemann and Knodt 2007; Schimmelfennig et al 2006; Wetzel and Orbie 2011; Youngs 2008). Others have attempted to assess the impact of democracy promotion in the 'recipient' countries (Finkel et al 2007; Scott and Steele 2011), while yet others have critically examined the ideological and/or conceptual underpinnings of democracy promotion (Goldsmith 2008; Hobson and Kurki 2012; Ish-Shalom 2006).

Still, there is much less comparative research on democracy promoters that would aim at systematically identifying the factors that motivate and guide democracy promotion.[4] The search for these factors constitutes the primary aim of the research project on which this article is based. More specifically, the project and this paper ask how interests and norms shape the decisions democracy promoters make when confronted with conflicting objectives. This focus on conflicting objectives is particularly suitable for the purpose at hand: When democracy promoters ('donors') have to weigh up competing objectives and make difficult decisions, this allows for inferences as to the motives and drivers behind democracy promotion.

When existing research considers conflicting objectives, the focus is mostly on what we call *extrinsic* conflicts: conflicts in which the aim to promote democracy clashes with

donor interests. Yet, in democracy promotion, such conflicts between norms and interests are usually accompanied by *intrinsic* conflicts of objectives that are characterised by a collision of different sub-goals of democracy promotion. For instance, an increase in political participation, while improving the quality of representation of a given political regime, may threaten to undermine the stability and/or effectiveness of fragile democratic institutions. Also 'procedural' and 'substantial' democracy norms may clash when a recipient government that is democratically elected pursues policies perceived as undemocratic. In such intrinsic conflicts, normative guidelines are ambivalent, and hence the confrontation of interests and norms becomes blurred. As each solution to an intrinsic conflict implies norm violation with regard to one democracy-related sub-goal (in favour of other sub-goals), this allows donors to solve extrinsic conflicts in favour of pursuing national interests without explicitly breaking with the declared aim of democracy promotion.

Privileging interests over norms: The limits of the 'semi-realist' view on democracy promotion

The prevailing view on democracy promoters' dealing with conflicting objectives concurs with what Thomas Carothers once called a 'semi-realist approach to democracy promotion'. Democracy promotion, from this perspective, constitutes a relevant, but secondary foreign-policy aim. When the aim to promote democracy proves 'contrary to economic or security interests […], it is usually overridden' (Carothers 1999: 16). Summarising the results of a comparative research project, Peter Schraeder (2003: 41) similarly concluded that 'democracy promotion is typically compromised when the normative goal of democracy clashes with other foreign policy interests'. A recent special issue on conflicting objectives in democracy promotion confirmed this observation (Grimm and Leininger 2012: 408).

The argument that the aim to promote democracy is secondary to other foreign-policy objectives combines two different rationales. On the one hand, states promote democracy because they expect a payoff in terms of their material interests. As such, democracy promotion has to measure up with other instruments that conceivably serve national interests. From this perspective, there are no conflicting objectives but just competing instruments. On the other hand, the notion of the 'normative goal of democracy'

(Schraeder 2003: 41) refers to a hierarchy of interests and norms. Here, the mainstream view is that, when openly colliding, governments pursue what they see as their 'national interests', even if this means adopting normatively inappropriate behaviour.

On closer look, both interpretations are not convincing. As mentioned in the introduction, the prevailing view among politicians and academics is that foreign policy interests and democratic values are very closely intertwined in democracy promotion. Accordingly, democracy promotion is generally not regarded as a 'purely soft' norm, but as a 'pragmatic interest that reinforces other interests' (Carothers 1999: 60), and in this sense it is frequently characterised as a national 'grand strategy' (Doyle 2000: 21; Monten 2005: 112). Scholars from quite different perspectives have argued that (US) democracy promotion has to be seen as a strategic project aimed at enhancing national security (T. Smith 1994; Miller 2010), supporting national economic interests (Cox 2000; S. Smith 2000), or more generally underpinning the global hegemony of the US, 'the West' or some transnational class (Gills 2000; Robinson 1996). Even if one acknowledges that the link between democracy promotion and such strategic considerations is long-term only, whereas other concerns related, for instance, to trade and security policy have a short-term and much more tangible impact, the notion that there is a 'strategic interest' in promoting democracy (McFaul 2005: 158) is scarcely compatible with the thesis that it can only lay claim to relevance when no immediate interests stand in its way.

A similar inconsistency in the literature on democracy promotion concerns the proposition that democracy promotion is a normative goal 'only' and therefore subordinate to materially defined foreign policy interests. Especially in the case of the US, scholars have shown the normative predisposition to promote democracy as a 'civil-religious impulse' or 'mission', deeply rooted in national identity (Poppe 2010: 5; see Desch 2007; Monten 2005; T. Smith 1994).[5] Cultural factors such as a particular national identity do not, of course, cause specific policies but operate in terms of constraining and enabling; they 'predispose collectivities toward certain actions and policies rather than others' (Duffield 1999: 772). As national identity shapes policy-makers' minds and creates expectations (and needs for justification) in the domestic arena (Nau 2000: 128-130), this effect cannot be simply turned off once a competing interest enters the equation. The same applies to the observation that democracy and democracy promotion have become increasingly established as international norms (Schraeder 2003: 25-26).

To the extent that there is such a shift in international norms, this has a regulative effect on international politics in the sense of limiting arbitrary and purely interest-based deviations from norm-consistent behaviour (see McFaul 2005: 160-161).

In sum, the notion that it is simple interest-driven double standards that explain the behaviour of democracy promoters is theoretically problematic because it fails to take into account the extent to which democracy promotion has become part of both the definition of strategic interests and of the broader normative-cultural, national and international environment in which foreign policies are formulated, and hence the interplay of both. As Finnemore (2003: 16) has argued in her study on the purposes of military interventions, treating 'perceptions of legitimacy' and 'perceptions of utility' as competing explanations 'is not only difficult but probably misguided, since it misses the potentially more interesting question of how the two are intertwined and interdependent.' For our endeavour the question is, therefore, not so much whether interests trump norms, but how interests and norms interact and shape each other in democracy promoters' reactions to conflicting objectives (see also Nau 2000).

The interaction of interests and norms: Alternatively conditioned double standards

The attempt to explain the reaction of democracy promoters to conflicting objectives by prioritising 'hard' foreign-policy interests over the 'soft' norm of democracy promotion is confronted with a basic problem: There is no objective way to assess which policy would serve the former or comply with the latter. Just like in the case of military intervention studied by Finnemore (2003: 5-6), interests do not provide unequivocal policy guidance and normative guidelines frequently prove contradictory.

A typical case of foreign-policy interests challenging the aim to promote democracy is a democratic recipient government whose policies are perceived as threatening vital donor interests. In this case, the donor government does not have an interest (in material terms) in the success of the recipient government, no matter its democratic credentials. As consequence, supporting opposition forces that are perhaps less democratic but more in line with donor interests becomes more plausible than supporting the government in its efforts to strengthen or deepen democratic governance. Such a reaction, while contradicting the declared aim to promote democracy, could indeed help secure donor interests. However, there is an inherent uncertainty and risk in such an approach as it is by

no means clear that it will lead to the establishment of a government that better complies with donor interests, but can also radicalise the recipient government, delegitimise the ('foreign-controlled') opposition, and increase domestic and international support for the recipient country.

As a result, foreign-policy interests in this case do not determine a clear-cut policy response: Even if the democratic government acts against donor interests, the benefits to be expected from attempts to change the status quo are far from guaranteed and easily offset by collateral damage. This is different in another typical case of extrinsic conflicts of objectives: a non-democratic recipient government that reliably cooperates with a given democracy promoter. Here, cooperating with the respective government – while ignoring or postponing efforts at promoting democracy – promises immediate yields in line with donor interests. In this case, foreign-policy interests clearly suggest what should be done.[6]

A similarly differentiated result emerges from normative considerations. In the case in which an interest-based policy calls for removing an elected government, this would clearly constitute an *active violation* of democratic norms. In the case of a cooperative authoritarian regime, however, interests call 'only' for *omitting* a normatively appropriate behaviour, that is, they suggest not to question the incumbent government. Supporting the removal of a democratic government is clearly and undisputedly a violation of democratic norms and thus inappropriate; yet, continuing cooperation with a non-democratic regime only neglects democratic norms which allows to circumscribe its appropriateness. This differentiated effect is strengthened by the fact that, in the former case, democracy-related norms and traditional international norms related to national sovereignty and non-intervention reinforce each other in the protection of a democratic government, while, in the latter case, sovereignty norms support the neglect of democracy-related norms.

In sum, neither interests nor norms have a uniform effect on shaping democracy promotion policies. As seen, the effect of an interest in upholding the political status quo in a given recipient country is greater than that of an equally strong interest in changing it. At the same time, the effect of one and the same norm is stronger in prohibiting its violation than in producing compliance. In contrast to the mainstream view that emphasises interest-driven double standards at the expense of norm-consistent behaviour, this dif-

ferentiated logic implies double standards that apply to both norms and interests. In the interaction between the two, this differentiated logic is reinforced because the effect of interests is weak when the effect of norms is strong, and vice versa.

To put our argument in a nutshell: Vis-à-vis a democratic government that threatens donor interests, the normative prohibition to openly fight it has a marked impact on donor policies in spite of these countervailing interests. In this case, the normative logic of appropriateness is clear-cut and thus relatively strong, while it is much less obvious that an interest-driven policy of changing the status quo in the recipient country would really pay off in terms of donor interests. Vis-à-vis a non-democratic government that serves donor interests, the comfort of the status quo consistently overrides the normative call on democracy promoters to engineer regime change. Here, the impact of norms is weaker (and a normatively appropriate outcome of regime change by no means secured), while an interest-driven policy of cooperation promises immediate gains. This is what we call a logic of alternatively conditioned double standards, which, as we show below, helps understand the complex ways in which democracy promoters deal with conflicting objectives.

Comparing US and German democracy promotion: The research project

Case selection and conduct of case studies

The research project, on which this article is based, analysed US and German policies towards six 'recipient' countries: Pakistan and Turkey, Bolivia and Ecuador, Belarus and Russia. As mentioned, in each of the recipient countries, the project zoomed in on particular periods in which political developments led to conflicting objectives on the part of the democracy promoters.

The US was selected as 'the world's most powerful democracy with unrivalled global reach and capabilities' (Herman and Piccone 2003: 212), which has decisive influence on the global discourse and practice of democracy promotion. Furthermore, the US is the world's largest provider of democracy assistance (Azpuru et al 2008). Germany was chosen because it ranks among the most important European donors in democracy assistance (Youngs 2008: 160-161). In addition, German foreign policy – including German democracy promotion – is often contrasted to the US approach. While the US is regular-

ly associated with strong security interests and an assertive, pro-active or missionary style of promoting democracy, Germany is typically considered a 'Civilian Power' that favours multilateralism in its foreign policy, is driven by economic rather than by security interests and behaves much more cautiously and reluctantly when it comes to interfering into the internal affairs of other states (see Maull 1990; Rüland and Werz 2002; Schraeder 2003: 33-38).[7]

The focus on US and German democracy promotion deliberately implies a state-centred perspective. One reason for this choice is that nation states are arguably still the most important type of actors in democracy promotion (see Magen and McFaul 2009: 2-4; Schraeder 2003: 34-40). The second reason is methodological: Given the differences in 'actorness' between states, international and non-governmental organisations, trying to identify the factors that shape state, non-state and multilateral democracy promotion on the basis of one inclusive theoretical framework and one general design of structured, focused comparison does not promise sound results.

In order to select recipient countries for the analysis, we first identified three regions that represent different types of challenges to democracy promotion: the Greater Middle East, South America and the post-Soviet space (see below). Within these regions, the individual countries were selected based on three criteria. First, since 1990, they have introduced basic institutions of democracy, at least temporarily.[8] Second, prior to the emergence of conflicting objectives, none of the countries was in a confrontation with the US and/or Germany. These two characteristics are important because, in order to trace reactions to *emerging* conflicts of objectives, the starting point for democracy promoters had to be relatively benign. In all countries, however, political developments have turned out considerably more difficult and contradictory than generally expected in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. In this sense, the six countries, like many others, demonstrate the failure of the 'Transition Paradigm' (Carothers 2002). In contrast to linear conceptions of transition, the selected countries – and this is the third criterion – underwent processes of political change in which the dilemmas that are inherent to democratization arose in different forms and compositions.[9] On the part of the external actors, these episodes meant that democracy promotion was challenged by serious conflicts of objectives.

Pakistan and Turkey represent challenges to democracy promotion that are characteristic of the (broadly defined) Greater Middle East. The rise of Islamist movements 'from below' challenges not only the political regimes in the region but also the interests of North-Western states cooperating with these regimes. Pakistan and Turkey are the two states in the region with at least temporarily democratic regimes. Their bilateral relations with the US and Germany have been generally cooperative and friendly, while both have been 'targets' of active efforts at promoting democracy. Since the 1990s, however, there have been growing concerns among democracy promoters about the increasing public presence of Islamist movements in the two countries as well as about the rise to power of Islamist parties.

South America's political regimes have also been challenged 'from below' since the turn of the century, albeit in quite different ways: Social movements opposed the alleged imperatives of neoliberal globalisation and toppled a number of elected governments. As part of a regional 'turn to the left', this opposition included a general critique of capitalism, liberal democracy and of the countries' external dependence (especially on the US). Bolivia and Ecuador represent countries in which this criticism translated into government policy. This includes a fundamental transformation of the political regimes in question, a departure from (neo-)liberal economics and an escalation of socio-political conflicts. These changes and conflicts have taken place within basically democratic settings, but nevertheless seriously challenge the interests and values of the North-Western donor community.

Belarus and Russia represent a political path that is characteristic for much of the post-Soviet space. Following an initial period of democratization in the early 1990s, in many countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) presidents were elected who turned to increasingly authoritarian rule. The result has been the emergence of regimes ranging from semi-authoritarianism to outright dictatorship. Belarus and Russia represent those states in the region that after temporary transitions to democracy turned into the opposite direction.[10]

In all three pairs of states democracy promoters have been confronted with significant conflicts of objectives that have both *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* dimensions. Across the recipient countries, 'democracy' – that is, democratic (majority) decisions – brought about results that, from the donors' point of view, challenged or, in extreme cases, directly

threatened democracy (intrinsic conflict). At the same time, security and/or economic donor interests were adversely affected (extrinsic conflict). In the cases of Pakistan and Turkey, the common challenge to democracy promotion has been constituted by the rise of Islamist movements; this raises the question whether donors should tolerate or even support restrictions on democracy or even coups d'état in order to protect the secular state and societal pluralism (intrinsic) and secure cooperation with the 'West' (extrinsic). In Bolivia and Ecuador, the election of 'radical' governments have forced donors to decide whether to tolerate, in the name of democratic self-determination, a gradual departure from universally conceived models of liberal democracy and market economy (intrinsic) as well as related threats to specific donor interests (extrinsic). In Belarus and Russia, political developments have given rise to the question of how democracy promoters should deal with governments that use domestic societal support to revert to authoritarianism (intrinsic) while donors are interested in securing continued international cooperation (at least on the part of Russia, extrinsic).

For all 12 pairs of states, qualitative case studies were conducted that included an extensive review of primary sources and scholarly literature as well as a series of interviews in both donor and recipient countries.[11] On this basis, first, the general profile of bilateral relations and the overall features of democracy promotion in the respective dyad were assessed. Then, following the method of process-tracing, donor reactions to conflicting objectives were analysed. As to the periods under investigation, all case studies considered the political development of the recipient countries as well as bilateral relations and donor policies since 1990 and, then, zoomed in on specific periods in which serious conflicts of objectives emerged (see the section on 'conflicting objectives' below). The results of these individual case studies, finally, served as the empirical material for the structured, focused comparison, whose results are presented below.[12]

Operationalising interests and norms

Drawing on theories of International Relations (IR) as well as on research on the Democratic Peace and democracy promotion, we have identified two interest- and two norm-based factors that are considered to guide democracy promoters: (1) the security interests of the donor in a given recipient country; (2) its economic interests; (3) the donor's specific culturally embedded conception of democracy promotion; and (4) international

norms, that is, the institutionalisation of norms related to democracy (promotion) in joint international organisations.[13] As described below, these factors have been specified by drawing on both statistical data and qualitative assessments. For all but the third variable (conceptions of democracy promotion) which is dichotomous, four-point ordinal scales were constructed that range from *very low* to *very high* and cover the empirical range constituted by the 12 pairs of states (see Table 1).[14]

[Table 1 about here]

Following a modified (Neo-) Realist IR perspective and rationalist approaches to the Democratic Peace, *security interests* favour democracy promotion when a donor government considers democratic regimes to behave more peacefully and cooperate more reliably in the international arena than non-democratic regimes. Promoting democracy, then, becomes an instrument of security policy (see Doyle 2000; T. Smith 1994). Hence it is security interests that determine whether democracy is promoted in a particular recipient country.

To rank security interests, three indicators were chosen. First, the extent of security cooperation between donor and recipient was ranked by comparing data on military assistance and military presence as well as by assessing joint – bi- and multilateral – organisations, programs and activities directly related to security issues. A second indicator concerned the possession of nuclear weapons by the recipient country (no: *very low*, yes: *very high*). Third, the strategic relevance of the recipient from the perspective of the donor was ranked based on qualitative case analysis. The rounded average of these three indicators yields the overall levels for security interests reported in Table 1.

Economic interests are equally often referred to in the literature. According to Economic Liberalism in IR (Moravcsik 1997: 528-529), democratic regimes promise conditions (predictability, stability, rule of law) that are crucial for economic cooperation. Democracy promotion, from this perspective, directly serves economic interests (Ikenberry 1999) – and it is economic interests that determines a donor's foreign policy and, thus, also democracy promotion vis-à-vis a given recipient country.

Two indicators measure economic interests: the amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the respective recipient country and the amount of bilateral trade, both meas-

ured as a share of total donor FDI/trade. Based on the rounded and weighted averages of these two indicators, an ordinal scale was constructed ranging from *very low* to *very high* economic interests.

From the perspective of an actor-centred Constructivist approach to IR (Harnisch 2003: 340), scholars have emphasised that it is culturally rooted national self-perceptions, roles or identities that shape how states form and change national preferences, perceive and interpret the outside world (see Duffield 1999; Holsti 1970; Katzenstein 1996). The ways in which a government promotes democracy, conceptualises democratization processes and defines its appropriate role as an external actor is, then, shaped by the historical experiences of a specific country and its more general (foreign) political culture. This factor – *national conceptions of democracy promotion* – is different from the other three in that it does not vary in accordance with different recipient countries: The theoretical expectation is that German and US democracy promotion policies will generally be shaped by their respective conceptual premises. Whether this is indeed the case – that is, to what extent actual policies correspond to overall rhetoric on democracy promotion –, is precisely one of the empirical questions for the comparative analysis.

In order to assess the conceptual differences, a qualitative content analysis was conducted that investigated the general outline of democracy promotion in official government documents from the two countries. This content analysis drew on 20 primary sources for each government (from White House/Chancellery, foreign and defence ministries and USAID/Germany's development ministry), covering all administrations since the early 1990s. Both subsamples included the most important official strategy papers and speeches on democracy promotion and on the general outline of foreign, defence and development policy. Systematically, the content analysis identified the universal values that are said to guide policies, the understanding of democratization, the attitude towards non-democrats and the style of democracy promotion.[15] Based on this analysis, German official rhetoric was categorised as generally corresponding to a 'Civilian Power' conception of democracy promotion while the US approaches an ideal-type conception we call 'Freedom Fighter'. The former is guided by rather abstract and broad values and conceptualises democracy promotion in a gradual and cooperative manner focusing on the long term and favouring dialogue and inclusion; the latter explicitly and assertively advocates the promotion of liberal-democratic values, favours immediate results

including regime change and does not shy away from making use of negative or confrontational strategies.[16]

While actor-centred Constructivism emphasises the domestic socio-cultural context, Constructivist approaches in IR also refer to the impact of 'international cultural environments' on foreign policy (Jepperson et al 1996: 34). More specifically, international norms can be seen as defining shared expectations of appropriate behaviour. In this sense, the extent to which democracy and democracy promotion are established as international norms directly impacts on the foreign policy of states. Although such democracy-related *international norms* have been established at the global level of the United Nations, they are much stronger, more explicit and institutionalised at the level of some regional organisations (Piccone 2005).

The strength of democracy-related international norms in a given dyad is assessed by looking at the joint international (regional) organisation with the highest democracy standards. Qualitative criteria for ranking different organisations include the extent to which democracy is institutionalised as a common, binding principle as well as the extent to which instruments to actually promote democracy are established. The global minimum standard is defined by the UN (ranked *very low*), the maximum by the EU including in its enlargement process (ranked *very high*). Based on a review of secondary literature, the democracy norms of the Organisation of American States (OAS) were ranked as relatively strong (i.e. *high*), NATO and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as relatively weak (i.e. *low*).

As can be seen in Table 1, the cases represent a wide range of constellations of interests and norms. Security interests on the part of the donor are sometimes pivotal, sometimes irrelevant. Economic interests are in some cases very high, in others marginal. In the cases involving the US, democracy promotion should be normatively shaped by a different conceptual approach ('Freedom Fighter') than in those involving Germany ('Civilian Power'). Finally, a few pairs of states are joint members of international organisations with very high democracy-related norms, while others are not.

Dealing with conflicting objectives: US and German democracy promotion in comparison

In the framework of this article, we cannot present the results of the mentioned research project in their entirety (see Wolff et al 2014). Instead we will zoom in on the ways in which the US and Germany dealt with conflicting objectives with a specific focus on the topic of this article: the interaction of interests and norms in democracy promotion. In the next section, we briefly summarise the conflicts of objectives that actually challenged US and German policies in the six recipient countries. Then, we show how a perspective on the interaction of interests and norms in general and the notion of alternatively conditioned double standards in particular help explain the observed patterns of reaction.

Given that the following comparative analysis draws on 12 case studies, we can present the individual cases in condensed form only.[17] While focusing on a few cases that are particularly crucial for our argument would allow for a more in-depth presentation of the empirical evidence, we wanted to preserve the particular advantages that come with the relatively broad comparative scope of this study. First, comparing, for each recipient country, US and German policies allows us to control for the idiosyncratic features that may be produced by specific recipient contexts. Second, by discussing all six recipient countries we are able to compare cases which are characterised by both extrinsic and intrinsic conflicts of objectives with others in which only extrinsic, only intrinsic or barely any conflict of objectives arises. As a result, we can demonstrate how our argument works across the range of different configurations of interests and norms (summarised in Table 1).

Conflicting objectives

The conflict situations in the six recipient countries pose quite different challenges to democracy – and thus produce equally different conflicts of objectives with which Germany and the US are confronted in their policies of democracy promotion. This applies to both the extrinsic and the intrinsic conflicts. In the following paragraphs, we will first look at extrinsic conflicts and then analyze their interplay with intrinsic conflicts. We start with the dyads without significant extrinsic conflicts, to then analyze the pairs of states in which foreign-policy interests did clash with democracy promotion.

In five pairs of states, democracy promoters were hardly confronted with extrinsic conflicts of objectives. This concerns German policy towards Bolivia, Ecuador and Turkey

as well as German and US relations with Belarus. As far as Germany's strategic interests are concerned, the governments led by Evo Morales in Bolivia (since 2006) and by Rafael Correa in Ecuador (since 2007) pose a classic low-intensity conflict: Germany's respect for democratic self-determination has been challenged by these countries' turn against 'neoliberalism' and towards Hugo Chávez's Venezuela, but the policy changes in the two Andean countries do not constitute threats to German 'national interests'.[18] With respect to Turkey, Germany certainly has vital economic and security interests, and the fact that the largest Turkish-speaking diaspora in the world lives in Germany gives the German policy on Turkey a distinct domestic blend. This, however, has not produced an extrinsic conflict of objectives: Even when Islamist parties – the Welfare Party (RP) briefly in the mid-1990s, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) since 2002 – rose to power, Germany did not feel tempted to adopt a confrontational posture. In the case of Belarus, the autocratic regime established by President Alexander Lukashenko after his first election in 1994 has not led to extrinsic conflicts of objectives, neither on the part of Germany nor on the part of the US. Only in the wake of the Caucasus war in 2008, the prospect of driving a wedge between Belarus and Russia – officially aligned in a union state – temporarily tempered the drive to confront Lukashenko with calls for democratization. Yet, most of the time and particularly pronounced in the US, democracy promotion (as a means to change the Lukashenko regime) was seen as serving 'Western' interests in regional balancing (as a means to contain Russia within the CIS).

The remaining seven pairs display clear-cut extrinsic conflicts of objectives. In US policies towards Bolivia, respect for self-determination has been compromised by drug-related security interests and strategic considerations: President Morales declared an end to the US-driven 'war on drugs' and to 'neoliberal' economics, joined the Venezuelan-led Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) and fiercely criticised the US government to the point of expelling, in 2008, the US ambassador and the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The election of Correa in Ecuador led to similar developments, including the closure of the US military base in Manta and threats to US business interests in the oil sector; yet, Correa's counternarcotics policies were much more in line with US preferences than those employed by Morales. In the case of Turkey pronounced US security interests in a reliable NATO ally collide with respect

for Turkish self-determination insofar as both Islamist parties, previously the RP and currently the AKP, have challenged the basic secular and Kemalist pro-Western orientation of the country.[19] Furthermore, democratic reforms of the AKP government have aimed at reducing the political role and influence of the Turkish military, the core addressee of US security policy. In the case of Pakistan, it was the war in Afghanistan that produced a serious conflict of objectives in that General Pervez Musharraf and his autocratic regime became a vitally important US ally in the 'war on terror' (until Musharraf's resignation in 2008). To some extent this also applied to Russia's cooperation in the 'war on terror', on Afghanistan and Iran which worked against a policy of democracy promotion towards the increasingly authoritarian regime of Vladimir Putin. The German conflict of objectives vis-à-vis Pakistan in the wake of the Afghanistan campaign evolved in line with the US. In the case of Russia, however, the German interest in cooperation has been markedly higher than the US interest, and it has been more economic than security-related.

Turning to intrinsic tensions in the democracy promotion agenda, the case studies not only reveal that the problem of conflicting objectives in democracy promotion consists of more than the well-known clash of 'interests' and 'norms'; they also demonstrate that – and how – the extrinsic conflicts are intertwined with intrinsic conflicts. The exception is Belarus, where neither German nor US democracy promotion was confronted with significant intrinsic conflicts of objectives: Both governments perceived the Lukashenko government as indisputably autocratic and anticipated no risks (of destabilisation) arising from potential democratization. In the remaining ten dyads, however, intrinsic conflicts of objectives posed real political challenges to be dealt with.

Putin, for instance, did not simply abolish Russian democracy but he assured political stability and state capacity following the chaotic and not-too-democratic Yeltsin era. During his first two terms, it was therefore difficult to assess whether the net impact on democracy was positive, neutral or negative. In the case of Pakistan, there could be no doubt that the 1999 coup put an end to democratic rule, but the experience with Pakistan democracy in the 1990s and the difficult domestic and regional situation lent some plausibility to Musharraf's claim that a gradual path of managed modernisation were the best strategy for long-term and sustainable democratization. Likewise, the implications of the governments of Evo Morales (Bolivia), Rafael Correa (Ecuador) and Recep Tay-

yip Erdoğan (Turkey) for democracy in respective countries are also ambivalent, if with a clearly pro-democratic bend. All three represent important progress towards improving democracy while, at the same time, their political projects include elements that – from the perspective of the donors – pose threats to liberal democracy: the preference for a plebiscitarian mode of governance which undermines liberal checks and balances and can pave the way towards one-party dominance; or the promulgation of indigenous, socialist or Islamic values at variance with liberal-democratic values.

Patterns of reaction

In tracing the patterns of reaction, we will again first discuss the five cases without extrinsic conflicts and then analyze the seven remaining pairs of states.

As was to be expected, donor reactions in the first group of dyads were generally in line with democracy promotion. Even in these rather straightforward cases, however, a closer look at the actual practice of democracy promotion in these dyads shows the need to look at the specific configurations of interests and norms and consider the potential relevance of intrinsic conflicts of objectives.

German policies towards Bolivia and Ecuador basically continued without major changes after Morales and Correa took office, combining support for and cooperation with the respective governments with non-provocative and non-confrontational democracy assistance activities. As it is typical for Germany, German official democracy aid to Bolivia and Ecuador has been focused on the public sector, governance-related issues and cooperation with the state, while the parastatal political foundations emphasised an all-encompassing dialogue, gradual change and long-term capacity building. In dealing with intrinsic conflicts in the two countries, Germany favoured strategies of engagement and supported processes of inclusive dialogue. Diplomatic appeals were used only very cautiously and the German government consistently avoided taking political sides. These patterns are generally in line with the overall aim of promoting democracy, but their specific shape cannot be explained simply by the absence of (adverse) economic and/or security interests: They rather correspond to the norms that guide a Civilian Power's democracy promotion.

In the case of US and German relations with Belarus, the low level of security or economic interests in the country facilitated a relatively consistent and increasingly coordi-

nated (albeit largely ineffective) Western policy of combining diplomatic pressure, public criticism and sanctions against the Lukashenko regime. In fact, German policies towards Belarus have been unusually assertive, which can be traced to the absence of intrinsic conflicts.[20] Still, there are interesting differences between the US and Germany, which mirror the normative distinction between a Civilian Power and a Freedom Fighter conception of democracy promotion. While US support for civil-society groups explicitly aimed at empowering the opposition to Lukashenko, support for Belarusian civil society by Germany's official development cooperation and political foundations did not go beyond the traditional, cooperative and politically non-partisan profile of German democracy promotion. The German government also generally supported EU sanctions against Belarus, but most of the time advocated restraint and showed a preference for engaging Lukashenko.[21]

German policy towards Turkey generally mirrors the cooperative stance mentioned in the cases of Bolivia and Ecuador. One crucial difference, however, concerns the role of the EU. Whereas Germany's bilateral democracy assistance was fairly limited and indirect (focused on technical issues), its main instrument has been intrusive political conditionality established by the EU enlargement process. This directly corresponds to the strong democracy norms at the regional level. However, the growing scepticism of the German government about Turkish accession to the EU has increasingly undermined this scheme of conditionality, directly contradicting the normative guidelines of both the Civilian Power conception and the regionally established set of norms.

Now we turn to the seven cases with clear-cut extrinsic conflicts. In line with the logic of alternatively conditioned double standards, these cases can be divided into two groups, according to the character of the recipient regime and the nature of the conflict: In US and German relations with Pakistan and Russia, democracy promoters had vital interests to cooperate with an autocratic (Musharraf) or increasingly authoritarian (Putin) government; US policies towards Bolivia, Ecuador and Turkey, by contrast, were confronted with the need to deal with democratic governments acting against stated national interests. As suggested by our theoretical argument, the interaction of interests and norms plays out differently in these two groups of dyads.

US and German policies towards Pakistan and Russia confirm the expectation that, when vital (i.e., *high* or *very high*) security and/or economic interests are served by co-

operation with incumbent governments, donors engage in democracy promotion only within the narrow constraints defined by these interests. Neither German nor US policies openly challenged Musharraf's or Putin's rule. In general, democracy-related criticism was downplayed, democratic conditionality ruled out and democracy assistance confined to cooperative, non-sensitive and long-term activities. Most notably, the US government after 9/11 waived democracy-related (and other) sanctions against the Musharraf regime and, in the following years, provided massive budgetary support for the military regime, thereby *de facto* promoting autocracy in Pakistan. In the case of Russia, official US statements became increasingly critical during George W. Bush's second term in office; but this had no substantial operational consequences and was later replaced by Obama's 'reset'. In the case of German policies towards Russia, even diplomatic appeals have been very cautious not to provoke this important international partner.

In dealing with both Pakistan and Russia, intrinsic conflicts enabled donors to justify their policies as normatively appropriate. The German government, for example, consistently pointed to the burden of history, the (still early) stages of democratic development, the need for stability as well as to difficult socio-economic conditions in Russia in order to qualify existing 'deficits'. In a similar way, US and German support for Musharraf was in part explained by the need to stabilise the country and, in terms of a strategy of gradual modernisation, to make it fit for democracy (given both the turbulent history of fragile democratic governments and the current terrorist/Islamist threat).

At the same time, norms did continue to shape bilateral relations, if in ways constrained by perceived national interests. Towards Russia, democracy promotion remained a relevant issue for both Germany and the US, even if this regularly interfered with interest-driven business as usual, at least in terms of raising suspicion. This, on the one hand, mirrors international democracy norms, which are stronger in Western relations with Russia than with Pakistan. On the other hand, it results from domestic pressure within Germany and the US and, thus, expresses the normative political context in which democratic foreign policies are formulated. For example, the relatively sympathetic attitude of the German government towards Putin's Russia regularly met with public criticism from opposition parties, NGOs and the media. Thus democracy and human rights remained on the bilateral agenda, even if on a rather low level. The not-too-political no-

tion of a ‘modernisation partnership’ between Germany and Russia offered a way to do justice to the normative guidelines of a Civilian Power conception of democracy promotion, without risking confrontation with the Russian government. In US policies towards Russia, it was members of Congress that, in line with the Freedom Fighter conception of democracy promotion, called for adopting much more assertive (and confrontational) measures. Even the close US cooperation with Pakistan following 9/11 proved controversial in the US and when, in 2007, tensions between Musharraf and the judiciary escalated it became increasingly difficult for the US administration to stick to its ally.[22] In trying to do justice to both perceived national interests and the normative demands from within the US, the Bush administration in 2007/2008 supported a controlled transition to civilian rule that would still leave Musharraf in the presidency.

In sum, even in the cases of US and German relations with Pakistan and Russia a purely interest-based explanation does not grasp the complex dynamics of donor policies. But the general patterns of reaction follow the overall logic of alternatively conditioned double standards – which, in these examples, corresponds to the ‘semi-realist’ view: Given vital security and/or economic interests in cooperation with incumbent governments, both the US and Germany generally omitted any activities aimed at reversing the military coup in Pakistan or the authoritarian tendencies in Russia. Whereas in the case of the US such policies did not at all correspond to the Freedom Fighter conception of democracy promotion and thus clearly contradicted overall government rhetoric, the German case shows that the Civilian Power conception of democracy promotion allows for much more flexibility in justifying cooperative relations with non-democratic governments.[23]

US policies towards Bolivia, Ecuador and Turkey represent the other side of the coin of our argument and, in fact, confirm the constraints on enforcing foreign-policy interests if this requires openly acting against democracy in recipient countries. Despite the violation of vital US interests by the Morales, Correa and Erdoğan administrations mentioned above, the US administration continued cooperation with the elected governments and refrained from confrontational reactions.

In the case of US-Bolivian relations, there was some US democracy aid designed to support political and institutional counterweights to the Morales government. But, at the same time, the US government continued support for the government and was willing to

adjust US democracy assistance to Bolivian demands. Tit-for-tat responses – such as the expulsion of the Bolivian ambassador, the suspension of trade preferences and the exclusion of Bolivia from the US Millennium Challenge Account in 2008 – were limited (by historic standards) and followed by attempts at diplomatic re-engagement. When the Bolivian government in 2009 demanded the USAID democracy program in the country to be closed down, the US administration did comply with this demand and still continued negotiating a new bilateral framework agreement (signed in late 2011).

In relations with Ecuador, despite the closure of the US military base in Manta, expulsions of US embassy personnel in 2009 as well as conflicts between US oil companies and Ecuador, bilateral relations remained remarkably calm, and the US continuously renewed trade preferences for the country until the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA) finally expired in July 2013. US democracy assistance to Ecuador included some support for civil-society organisations with an oppositional reputation, but in general US activities to strengthen pluralism and checks on the government were rather cautious and in line with Correa's preferences (focusing on local governments and the judicial system).

In the case of Turkey, the US – while sticking to its traditional Kemalist allies and the military in particular – also continued cooperating with the AKP government and tried to maintain a rather neutral position vis-à-vis intra-Turkish conflict. In contrast to the German government, the US refrained from explicitly supporting the AKP government against domestic threats to ban the party in 2008. Still, Turkey under the AKP government continued to receive significant amounts of US foreign aid. This aid included only a minor part of – decidedly non-confrontational – democracy assistance. In no instance did US diplomacy or foreign aid actively confront the AKP government.

Of course, these cautious US reactions in Bolivia, Ecuador and Turkey reflect not necessarily a genuine respect for democratic norms, but also a pragmatic acceptance of the balance of power in the recipient countries as well as the uncertainties and risks associated with any attempts to undermine respective governments.[24] This mutual reinforcement of the normative prohibition and the material expediency to fight elected governments is at the core of our argument: These cases suggest that democratic legitimacy protects governments that act against US preferences from being confronted with corresponding US countermeasures.

At the same time, the prevalence of intrinsic conflicts enabled the US to frame only limited support to democratic governments as normatively in line with democracy promotion. In the case of Turkey, US reluctance to explicitly support the AKP government against domestic threats from the old Kemalist elite was justified by referring to the country's constitution and its 'secular democratic principles' (which was, to be sure, once imposed by the military). Bolivia's exclusion from US Millennium Challenge Account aid was technically based on a gradual decline in governance indicators. And the US focus on fighting drug production and trafficking in the Andean region has always been justified as contributing as much to core US interests as to the stability of the local democratic regimes.

In general, US reactions to intrinsic conflicts of objectives in Bolivia, Ecuador and Turkey resemble the pattern observed for Germany. On the one hand, both Germany and the US evaluated the situation according to their particular (liberal-democratic and capitalist) concepts of a 'good' political order: They were generally sceptical of Islamist parties in Turkey and feared 'Islamisation' (or 'Iranisation'), and they were in favour of preserving as much as possible the liberal-democratic character of the emerging political regimes in Bolivia and Ecuador. In general, the US, in line with its own democratic tradition, tended to emphasise checks and balances and political counterweights more than Germany. Yet, in the end, neither the US nor Germany insisted on their specific models of democracy but were rather flexible and pragmatic in adjusting to local conceptions when in free and fair elections undisputed majorities expressed their support for a given direction of political development, as with the AKP agenda for Turkey and the political projects of Morales and Correa in the South American cases.[25] 'Technical' advice, capacity building and the promotion of dialogue as well as diplomatic appeals served as instruments to spread donor concepts of democracy and development, to promote a pluralist debate and to strengthen 'moderate' (democratic, liberal) voices. Yet, once domestic politics in recipient countries in one way or another 'solved' an intrinsic conflict, donors basically accepted this internal solution – whether it complied with donor preferences or not.[26]

Discussion

Across the 12 cases, donor policies were found as either more cooperative or more democracy-oriented than the 'semi-realist' perspective would have led us to expect. Yet, at the same time, when seen from a normative or idealist perspective on democracy promotion, policies were either too confrontational or too cautious. These ambivalent patterns, we argue, are grasped by the logic of alternatively conditioned double standards.

For instance, in US policies towards Bolivia, Ecuador and Turkey, 'national interests' would have suggested much less cooperation with the incumbent governments than was observed. Still, US respect for democratic self-determination has been more ambiguous than normatively appropriate. German policies towards Turkey and Russia as well as US policies towards Russia have been more democracy-oriented than purely rationalist interest calculation would appreciate: Democracy promotion was clearly circumscribed by perceived national interests and, yet, the declared aim to promote democracy did continue to shape donor policies and bilateral relations more generally. At the same time, the extent to which donors actively promoted democracy in these cases was very low indeed when compared to an idealistic perspective on democracy norms.

The notion of alternatively conditioned double standards, by grasping the differentiated impact of and the interplay between interests and norms, helps understand these complex realities of democracy promotion: the particularly ambiguous US policies towards Bolivia, Ecuador and Turkey; the unusually consistent pattern of democracy promotion in the cases US/Belarus, Germany/Belarus, Germany/Bolivia and Germany/Ecuador; the low-profile of democracy promotion in the dyads US/Russia, Germany/Russia and Germany/Turkey; and the virtual non-existence of any democracy promotion in US and German policies towards Pakistan.

Taking the interaction of interests and norms into account also requires a closer look at the precise nature of both the specific interests and the particular norms that interact in a given case. For instance, it is the combination of economic interests and the normative predispositions characteristic of the Civilian Power that explains why Germany started to engage Pakistan's military ruler Musharraf and actually resumed its development cooperation with the country already before 9/11. The US attempt to support political and institutional counterweights to the Morales government in Bolivia – which contrasted with a much more cooperative and government-oriented German style of democracy assistance – was clearly in line with US interests (threatened by Morales), but was argu-

ably also shaped by a specific, decidedly liberal conception of democracy. This also helps understand why German and US policies towards Belarus, while broadly in line, still had a different bias towards engaging or sanctioning the Lukashenko regime: In the design of US policies an interest in containing Russian influence combined with a normative propensity to use confrontational measures to promote regime change ('Freedom Fighter'), while in the case of Germany both the strategic approach to (engaging) Russia and normative predispositions ('Civilian Power') qualified the willingness to use democracy sanctions and other confrontational measures.

Conclusion

This article has argued that democracy promotion can neither be understood as simply norm-guided nor as purely interest-driven. Defying the juxtaposition of material and ideational factors, democracy promotion policies are the result of a complex interaction of interests and norms. More specifically, we have argued that this interaction follows a logic of alternatively conditioned double standards. In contrast to the mainstream view that emphasises interest-driven double standards at the expense of norm-consistent behaviour, this differentiated logic implies double standards that apply to both norms and interests and are reinforced by the interaction between the two (because the effects of norms are relatively weak precisely when the effects of interests are relatively high and vice versa). After first developing this argument theoretically, we have presented results from a comparative research project on US and German democracy promotion that support this claim. Of course, the question of generalisability remains – calling for further comparative research, possibly also of a large-N kind.

When analysing how democracy promoters deal with conflicting objectives, the logic of alternatively conditioned double standards helps explain, in particular, one important pattern that we observe across our case studies: The constraining effects of democracy-related norms are much stronger when interest-driven policies would suggest confronting a democratic government than they are when would-be democracy promoters have a strong interest in cooperating with an autocratic one. As we have argued, the former is shaped by the interaction between a relatively strong normative prohibition (not to actively violate democracy-related norms) and a relatively weak interest-based motivation (because actively fighting a government is risky), while in the latter case the normative

prohibition (against omitting appropriate behaviour) is weaker and the interest-based motivation stronger (because cooperation promises immediate gains).

To be sure, phrases such as 'relatively strong' and 'relatively weak' imply that this argument is not about predetermined outcomes: Being democratically elected increases the protection of a recipient government against interest-driven countermeasures by North-Western democracies, but it is not an absolute guarantee. This qualification is also related to the fact that the stated normative effect depends on perceptions of complex political realities and corresponding expectations of appropriate behaviour. For instance, the political agenda pursued by an elected government may be presented as threatening democracy – paradoxically justifying undemocratic countermeasures in the name of protecting democracy against its enemies. This pattern is well-known from the anti-communist narrative during the Cold War, which equated communist with undemocratic. In the contemporary world, North-Western reactions to electoral successes by Islamist forces have, at times, exhibited similar features, without however (up to now) leading to the kind of direct intervention against elected governments seen during the Cold War.[27]

These qualifications clearly suggest that the ways in which the interaction of interests and norms shapes actual democracy promotion policies cannot be simply predicated on some quasi objective factors. Yet, in line with the logic of alternatively conditioned double standards, what still remains is a specific normative burden of proof that applies in the case of actions against democratic governments – a normative obstacle that is further supported by the uncertain prospects of pursuing one's 'material' interests through a policy of regime change.

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Table 1: Configurations of interests and norms in comparison

	(1) Security Interests	(2) Economic Interests	(3) National Conceptions	(4) International Norms
USA/Pakistan	very high	high	FF	very low
Germany/Pakistan	high	high	CP	very low
USA/Turkey	high	high	FF	low
Germany/Turkey	high	very high	CP	very high
USA/Bolivia	high	low	FF	high
Germany/Bolivia	very low	very low	CP	very low
USA/Ecuador	high	high	FF	high
Germany/Ecuador	very low	low	CP	very low
USA/Belarus	very low	very low	FF	low
Germany/Belarus	low	low	CP	low
USA/Russia	very high	high	FF	low
Germany/Russia	very high	very high	CP	high

Note: All factors but 'National Conceptions' were ranked by drawing on both statistical data and qualitative assessments as briefly indicated above (an appendix with detailed information is available from the authors). All (sub-) indicators and determinants were ranked on a four-point ordinal scale (*very low*, *low*, *high*, *very high*). The third factor is a dichotomous variable that is either FF (Freedom Fighter) or CP (Civilian Power) because actor-centred Constructivism would not expect idiosyncratic conceptions of democracy promotion to vary in accordance with different recipient countries.

Endnotes

[1] This argument has been made, most prominently, by research on the so-called Democratic Peace. See, for instance, Cox et al. (2000); Doyle (2000); Ikenberry (1999); Ish-Shalom (2006).
[2] For some prominent writings that deal with (and largely defend) this notion of democracy promotion as a foreign-policy strategy that is both morally good and strategically smart, see Doyle (2000); Ikenberry (1999); Muravchik (1991); T. Smith (1994); Talbott (1996); Youngs (2004: chapter 2).
[3] In response to the association of 'democracy promotion' with the policies of the George W. Bush administration, scholars and practitioners have increasingly suggested replacing it with the more benign notion of 'democracy support' (see Lennon 2009).
[4] Most studies of a theoretical and/or explanatory purpose focus on one democracy promoter, mostly the US (see Miller 2010; Monten 2005; Peceny 1999; Robinson 1996). Existing comparative studies on democracy promoters are largely descriptive (see Burnell 2000; Herman and Piccone 2003; Magen et al 2009; Youngs 2004). Also the edited volume by Schraeder (2002), which offers interesting insights into the factors that drive democracy promotion, has not been designed to systematically account for differences and changes in democracy promotion policies.
[5] With a view to both 'Americans and Europeans', Magen and McFaul (2009: 2) argue that 'Democracy as a constitutive norm of the West is stronger than ever before, […] while its promotion outside the transatlantic community has rapidly become an accepted and increasingly institutionalized foreign policy practice'.
[6] Of course, supporting autocratic regimes can also backfire in the longer term as autocracies are considered less stable than democracies. But the crucial difference between the two constellations is that cooperation with an autocracy combines immediate gains with an uncertain future, while the benefits to be expected from a policy of promoting regime change are neither reliably calculable in the short nor in the long term.
[7] Research usually compares US and 'European' or EU democracy promotion efforts (see Carothers 2009; Kopstein 2006; Magen et al 2009; Youngs 2004). For our purposes, however, such a comparison is problematic given the heterogeneity of 'Europe' and the very peculiar 'actorness' of the European Union.
[8] The precise criterion for case selection was that a country had at least temporarily reached a minimum of six points on the Polity IV scale (see Marshall and Jaggers 2006).
[9] In the project (Wolff et al 2014) we broadly distinguish three dilemmas of democratization: (1) Democratic regimes – and, in particular, political regimes in a process of democratization – can be threatened by escalating conflicts destabilizing democratic institutions ('democracy' vs. 'stability'). (2) Multiple and contradictory societal demands may render an effective *and* democratic governance impossible ('democracy' vs. 'governability'). (3) Democratic procedures can lead to majority decisions that threaten core (constitutional) principles of democracy ('democracy' vs. 'majority').
[10] Other countries of the region such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan did not come close to a democratic regime status in the 1990s (see Marshall and Jaggers 2006). Countries that did so (such as Armenia, Georgia or Ukraine) did not experience a clear-cut democratic backlash. Belarus and Russia, by contrast, are classified as 'not free' by Freedom House (2012).
[11] Interviews were conducted with representatives of the two donor governments and the respective organisations implementing official democracy promotion, with representatives of recipient governments and non-state partner organisations as well as with academic experts in the different countries.
[12] On the two overall methods of process-tracing and structured, focused comparison, see, for instance, George and Bennett (2005).
[13] In the research project, we identified and analyzed two additional factors: the relative power position in the bilateral relationship between donor and recipient and domestic special interests in the donor country. Given space restrictions and our focus on the interaction of interests and norms, these factors are not discussed here (but see Wolff et al 2014). For a comprehensive analysis of competing theoretical perspectives on democracy promotion, see Wolff and Wurm (2011).
[14] A comprehensive presentation of the data, measurement and sources can be found in an appendix available from the authors on request.
[15] The analysis – including sources, methods and results – is presented in Poppe et al. (2014).
[16] These two ideal-type conceptions are systematically developed in Poppe et al. (2014). Our ideal type 'Civilian Power' draws on the correspondent concept introduced by Hanns Maull (1990).
[17] For more details, see the case study chapters in Wolff et al (2014).

[18] As seen in the section above, German economic and security interests in the two Andean countries were low. Only in one (minor) case, a Germany company and, thus, German business interests were affected by the new Bolivian policies of 'nationalisation'.
[19] In a notable decision in 2003, the Turkish parliament did not allow US troops to invade Iraq from Turkish soil.
[20] In addition, although regional democracy-related norms as formally established by joint international organisations are rather low in this case, the German perception of Belarus as a European country expected to comply with European values and norms ('Europe's last dictatorship') made explicit and confrontational measures for democracy promotion appear normatively appropriate in this particular country.
[21] Exceptions were the reactions to the 1996 referendum and to the repression after the 2010 elections.
[22] What is remarkable about German policies towards Pakistan is that the German government started to engage Musharraf and actually resumed its development cooperation with the country already in 2000, that is, well before 9/11. This policy, therefore, cannot be explained simply in terms of security interests.
[23] Across the cases, US rhetoric proved much more explicit than Germany's in terms of emphasizing normative standards and criticizing what it perceives as violation of such standards. The US was also more willing to respond to open violations of democratic rule with (the threat of) sanctions. US democracy assistance, like German official aid, applied cooperative, government-oriented and long-term strategies but it also included support for – and empowerment of – opposition (civil-society) groups. And in some instances the US even tried to directly influence the outcome of internal democratic processes. In general, therefore, US democracy promotion draws on both Freedom Fighter-type and Civilian Power-type activities, while Germany confines itself to the latter.
[24] The crisis in US-Bolivian diplomatic relations, which included the expulsion of the US ambassador and the DEA and was accompanied by a domestic consolidation of the Morales government, is a case in point. Whatever the precise nature and extent of US support for the Bolivian opposition, it clearly backfired both in terms of domestic politics in Bolivia and in terms of US influence on the Morales government.
[25] In addition, relatively good performance in terms of stability, peace and governance led donors to downplay democracy-related problems. This, for example, improved donor perceptions of the democratic performance of the AKP government in Turkey and Correa in Ecuador, and it attenuated critical assessments of Musharraf and Putin.
[26] The forms of such 'acceptance' ranged from toleration – in the sense of not adopting active countermeasures – all the way to direct support.
[27] Prominent examples include the debate about and the reactions to the Hamas victory in Palestine in 2006, the response to the election of and then coup against Mohamed Morsi in Egypt in 2012/2013, or, in the early 1990s, the North-Western toleration of the aborted elections in Algeria.